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July 18, 2016

VA Announces New Partnerships and Collaboration

Commitment is Part of the VA's Expanded Strategic Partnership Efforts

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced partnerships and collaboration with [Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation](#), [IBM](#) and [Bombas](#). The three, distinct, relationships are a part of the MyVA Strategic Partnership Initiative, which aims to work together with external organizations to improve the delivery and access of care for Veterans. The announcement of the three new partnerships came on the heels of the [MyVA Advisory Committee](#) meeting held last week in Boston. [MyVA](#) is the largest transformation in the history of VA.

“The strength of MyVA is enhanced by the public-private partnerships we are forming,” said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. “Over the past two years, we have engaged in dozens of new and important partnerships. We are pleased to work with these companies and organizations who have committed their resources to serve the Veterans who served our nation.”

- The **Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation** will partner with VA to identify synergies and facilitate linkages between our respective programs. To date, BMSF has awarded 30 grants totaling over \$15 million to veterans service organizations and academic teaching hospital partners to develop, implement and evaluate innovative models of community-based care and support that improve the mental health and community reintegration outcomes of Veterans and their families. Together, through this new partnership, the two organizations are committed to serving more Veterans throughout the continuum of care from community to clinical settings.
- On June 29, Vice President Biden hosted a Moonshot Cancer Summit in Washington DC to bring together private and public partners to encourage collaboration in treatment and cures for cancer. As a part of that initiative, VA teamed up with **IBM Watson Health** to increase access to precision medicine for 10,000 VA cancer patients over the next two years. VA provides care to 3.5 percent of the nation's cancer patients – the largest group of cancer patients in the country. Watson is expected to help VA clinicians give Veterans rapid access to precision medicine options, particularly for patients with advanced cancer.
- VA also announced a collaboration with **Bombas**. Bombas was founded two years ago as a give-back sock company, after learning that socks are the #1 most-requested clothing item at homeless shelters. For every pair of socks purchased from the company, it donates a pair of socks, and to date has donated nearly 1 million pairs. To reach homeless Veterans in New York, Bombas worked with VA medical centers donating 700 pairs of socks to the NY Harbor and Bronx VA Medical Centers. Bombas and VA plan to continue their work together throughout the rest of the year and in the future, to expand the reach of the program to other cities and states across the country.

Each of these relationships align with the strategic priorities of mental health, research and homelessness and reflect VA's commitment to teaming with external organizations and companies to better serve Veterans.

Since the launch of MyVA, the Department has entered into new relationships with a number of external organizations to combat issues of homelessness, suicide and Veteran unemployment.

More information about MyVA may be found at

www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/21806/myva-a-message-from-sec-bob-mcdonald. Information about the three new VA partners may be found at www.bms.com/foundation/Pages/home.aspx; www-03.ibm.com/press/us/en/pressrelease/50061.wss; and www.bombas.com.

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